How Stages Correlates with Illinois Alternate Assessment

Stages provides opportunities for Illinois learners with special needs to demonstrate mastery of skills for the portfolio.

(1) Instructors helping a learner to build a portfolio benefit from the powerful data-gathering features of Stages.

(2) Through Stages, learners gain meaningful and effective access to general curriculum areas.

(3) Stages helps IEP teams to determine the learning environment most suited toward the learner.

The following document describes the relevance of Stages to the learner portfolio in greater detail.

Stages and the Illinois Alternate Assessment Process

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal benchmark software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances the Illinois Alternate Assessment Process because:

- **Stages correlates with the content of Illinois Alternate Performance Indicators.**
- **Stages generates evidence for the learner's portfolio.**
- **Stages allows learner to practice functional skills prior to exposure in the community.**
- **Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

(1) Stages correlates with the content of Illinois Alternate Performance Indicators.
Stages ensures meaningful and effective access to general curriculum areas for those learners who are building a portfolio linked to the Alternate Performance Indicators.

(2) Stages generates evidence for the learner's portfolio.
During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to capture a learner-generated product. At the end of each activity, a report with data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The instructional team member may wish to then print that screen or save the information as a text-format electronic file.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructor make the most out of an activity session as the data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. The instructor can work together with an assistant: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructor needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.

(3) Stages allows learner to practice functional skills prior to exposure in the community.
The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid.

(4) Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.
An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's IEP team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the Illinois alternative assessment cycle. The Stages software is a comprehensive tool to assist the IEP team in collecting valuable portfolio evidence, determining assessment strategy, and discovering the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with Illinois Alternate Assessment[1]

English / Language Arts
Goals, Standards and Alternate Performance Indicators [API] as They Relate to Stages Activities

Related Stages Activities
The instructor, guided by Stages Observation Forms during activities, records learner behavior while Stages software records learner clicks and choices, time spent, correctness and other data for the portfolio.

STATE GOAL 1: READ WITH UNDERSTANDING AND FLUENCY.

Standard 1A. Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selection.
Standard 1B. Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
Standard 1C. Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.

❖ **Related API: The student will use pictures, symbols, words or word phrases to gather information, denote meaning and build a vocabulary.**

Stage Two: *Activities:* Nouns, Verbs, Attributes

Stage Two activities engage the learner in attending to and absorbing vocabulary. Short rhyming passages are accompanied by graphics at different levels of abstraction: photograph, drawing, and symbol.

❖ **Related API: The student will use appropriate communication systems to make choices.**

Stage Three: *Activities:* Object Identification, Category Identification, Function Identification

These activities extend vocabulary from Stage Two and allow the learner to make choices in response to questions about identification, classification, and functional use of objects. Words are accompanied by symbols and graphics.

❖ **Related API: The student will recognize context clues in illustrations. The student will imitate rhythm patterns. The student will "read" an unfamiliar book by looking at the pictures and guessing what the story might be about. The student will recognize questions in oral language and/or text.**

Stage Five: *Reading:* Explore Sounds, Meaning, Context
Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan
Explore: Telling Time, Using Money, Getting Dressed, Looking at Signs, Using Objects

Pictures, signs, and words provide context for new vocabulary in the Stage Five Reading activities. The learner chooses words to explore, then identifies words as objects in a scene. Explore activities in Stage Six introduce functional vocabulary. Context for the same new vocabulary is provided by the multimedia stories.

[1] Information found in Resource Guide for the Illinois Learning Standards, by the Illinois State Board of Education, Measured Progress, Inc., The Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment Group, University of Kentucky, August 2001. Document source: http://www.measuredprogress.org/ProductsandServices/SpecialEducation/Illinois/ILResourceGuide2001.pdf (Accessed on March 5, 2002).

STATE GOAL 2: READ AND UNDERSTAND LITERATURE REPRESENTATIVE OF VARIOUS SOCIETIES, ERAS AND IDEAS.

Standard 2A. Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
Standard 2B. Read and interpret a variety of literary works.

❖ **Related API: The student will attend to stimuli connected to reading materials. The student will engage in listening for an extended period of time. The student will experience a wide range of informational sources (e.g., picture books, poems, multimedia). The student will recognize questions in oral language and/or text. The student will use appropriate communication systems to follow directions. The student will recognize content clues in illustrations.**

Stage Three: *Activities:* Object Identification, Category Identification, Function Identification
Stage Four: *Reading Readiness:* Explore: Letter ID, Letter Sounds
Stage Five: *Reading:* Explore: Letters, Meaning
Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan
Explore: Telling Time, Using Money, Getting Dressed, Looking at Signs, Using Objects

Stages activities allow the student to communicate interests and choices using an appropriate input device. Explore activities in Stages Four, Five and Six are ideal ways for the learner to discover objects. Stage Six Stories combine text, audio, and video with a variety of real-life situations.

❖ **Related API: The student will use gestures, pictures, signs, symbols, words or word phrases to gather information, denote meaning and build a vocabulary. The student will imitate rhythm patterns.**

Stage Two: *Activities:* Nouns, Verbs, Attributes
Stage Four: *Activities:* Colors, Shapes
Stage Five: *Reading:* Explore and Assess: Sounds, Meaning, Context
Math: Explore: Charts and Graphs, Math Facts, Word Problems, Geometry, Fractions
Problem Solving: Mystery Practice

Stage Two exposes the learner to simple nouns, verbs and attributes (color and size) using short rhyming passages and graphics in photo, drawing, or symbol levels of abstraction. Stage Four and Stage Five activities give the learner an accessible format to listen/attend to words, stories, directions, and rhymes.

❖ **Related API: The student will respond to questions in oral language and text.**

Stage Six: *Assess:* Telling Time, Money Names, Money Equivalents, Counting Money, Getting Dressed, Looking at Signs, Using Objects
Stage Seven: *Making Stories*

Stage Six presents the learner with multiple choice questions in oral, text, or combined formats. Stage Seven provides an accessible keyboard for the student to create original written responses to topics and answer comprehension questions regarding a story using his own communication system.

STATE GOAL 3: WRITE TO COMMUNICATE FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES.

Standard 3A. Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.
Standard 3B. Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
Standard 3C. Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

❖ **Related API: The student will recognize the letters on a keyboard.**

Stage Four: *Reading Readiness:* Explore and Assess Letter ID

The Stage Four Letter ID activities give the learner an opportunity to explore the upper- and lower-case letters of the alphabet, and then identify those letters from sets of 6 or 7. The activities are accompanied by engaging yet simple animations.

❖ **Related API: The student will respond to questions in oral language and text.**

Stage Seven: *Making Sentences:* Building Sentences, Spelling and Grammar, Writing Sentences
Making Stories

The Stage Seven *Building Sentences* activity provides word walls of three levels of difficulty so that the learner need not use a keyboard to demonstrate the ability to compose sentences. Other Stage Seven activities provide an accessible keyboard for the student to independently answer questions, write short passages, and any other appropriate writing task using a mouse, switch, pointer, or touchscreen. The *Spelling and Grammar* activities include topics such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word order, homonyms, and allow the instructor to create, save, and reuse custom activities. The *Making Stories* activity provides pictures that the learner can use as writing prompts. The learner can also write about a personal picture that they import.

STATE GOAL 4: LISTEN AND SPEAK EFFECTIVELY IN A VARIETY OF SITUATIONS.

Standard 4A. Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.
Standard 4B. Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

❖ **Related API: The student will use a communication board to express needs and wants. The student will respond to questions using a variety of communication devices.**

Stage Seven: *Making Sentences:* Building Sentences
Making Stories

The Building Sentences activity provides a word wall with text-to-speech capability so the learner can practice using a device to "speak" sentences. Making Stories also provides accessible text-to-speech capability.

❖ **Related API: The student will use a variety of communication devices for expressive and receptive language purposes.**

All Stages

Auditory, visual and multisensory prompts in every Stage require the learner to attend to spoken and/or text directions in order to answer questions, explore items, or advance to the next section of an activity.

STATE GOAL 5: USE THE LANGUAGE ARTS TO ACQUIRE, ASSESS AND COMMUNICATE INFORMATION.

Standard 5A. Locate, organize and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
Standard 5B. Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
Standard 5C. Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

❖ **Related API: The student will match or sort objects or information related to a topic or category.**

Stage Three: *Activities:* Category Identification

Animals, Vehicles, and Clothing are presented in Stage Three using photos, drawings and symbols. The learner selects the object that fits the category.

❖ **Related API: The student will use a communication system to read stories and, subsequently, to understand comprehension questions. The student will engage in listening for an extended period of time. The student will use acquired information to complete a task. The student will select a story more than once. The student will generalize learned information to a variety of settings. The student will communicate, respond, and make requests/choices in response to information gathered.**

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan
Assess: Telling Time, Money Names, Money Equivalents, Counting Money, Getting Dressed, Looking at Signs, Using Objects

Stories activities are accessible and have settings for auditory, text, or combined presentation. The Assess activities relate directly to the content of the Stories and can be generalized to a variety of settings.

❖ **Related API: The student will respond to questions in oral language and text. The student will listen to passages read to him or her and use pictures, symbols, or words to communicate the meaning of the passage.**

Stage Seven: *Making Sentences:* Building Sentences, Spelling and Grammar, Writing Sentence
Making Stories

The Stage Seven *Building Sentences* activity provides word walls of three levels of difficulty so that the learner need not use a keyboard to demonstrate the ability to compose sentences. Other Stage Seven activities provide an accessible keyboard. The *Spelling and Grammar* activities in Stage Seven include punctuation, capitalization, word order, homonyms, and custom activities. The *Making Stories* activity provides pictures as writing prompts.

Mathematics
Goals, Standards and Alternate Performance Indicators [API] as They Relate to Stages Activities

STATE GOAL 6: DEMONSTRATE AND APPLY A KNOWLEDGE AND SENSE OF NUMBERS, INCLUDING NUMERATION AND OPERATIONS (ADDITION, SUBTRACTION, MULTIPLICATION, DIVISION), PATTERNS, RATIOS AND PROPORTIONS.

Standard 6A. Demonstrate knowledge and use of numbers and their representations in a broad range of theoretical and practical settings.

Standard 6B. Investigate, represent and solve problems using number facts, operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) and their properties, algorithms and relationships.

Standard 6C. Compute and estimate using mental mathematics, paper-and-pencil methods, calculators and computers.

Standard 6D. Solve problems using comparison of quantities, ratios, proportions and percent.

❖ **Related API: The student will use physical objects to demonstrate more/less and first/last (e.g., students in a line) as a natural part of an activity. The student will guess who is older. The student will play computer games that involve problem-solving or elementary mathematical concepts.**

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Explore Compare, Estimating, Spatial Relationships
Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Number Guess, Mystery Shapes, Mystery Person

Accessible scenes in Stage Four provide the learner with objects to explore and demonstrate mastery of relationships between objects. The Problem Solving activities in Stage Five apply those concepts on a slightly more complex level.

❖ **Related API: The student will complete solutions for the four operations using a variety of strategies (e.g., paper, pencil, concrete objects, calculation) and get a correct answer. The student will choose a method (+, -, x, ÷) to solve a problem. The student will compute correct answer to a simple mathematical problem.**

Stage Five: *Math:* Math Facts (+, -, x, ÷), Word Problems(+, -, x, ÷), Geometry

These Stage Five activities include Explore sections to remind the learner of how to solve arithmetic problems by using paper and pencil and on-screen virtual manipulatives. In the Assess activities, they solve simple math problems.

❖ **Related API: The student will identify fractional amounts of concrete materials (e.g., sets of objects, 1/2 of the candy bar).**

Stage Five: *Math:* Fractions

Fractions problems that the learners solve in these activities involve items such as animals and foods that are familiar to the learner from previous Stages activities.

❖ **Related API: The student will count time in halves and quarters (half-hours and quarter-hours).** ***Also, API from State Goal 7: The student will tell time to the hour, half-hour, quarter-hour, and/or minute using a standard or digital clock.***

Stage Six: *Explore and Assess:* Telling Time

Digital and analog clocks are included in these activities, and relate time of day to daily activities.

❖ **Related API: The student will count out nine dollar bills, plus one additional dollar bill for change.** ***Also, API from State Goal 7: The student will use the correct change to make a purchase.***

Stage Six: *Explore and Assess:* Using Money, Counting Money, Money Equivalents
Stories: Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

The *Counting Money* activity is closely tied to the *Stories* so that the learner can become familiar with the function of money in the various realistic settings.

STATE GOAL 7: ESTIMATE, MAKE AND USE MEASUREMENTS OF OBJECTS, QUANTITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS AND DETERMINE ACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF ACCURACY.

Standard 7A. Measure and compare quantities using appropriate units, instruments and methods.
Standard 7B. Estimate measurements and determine acceptable levels of accuracy.
Standard 7C. Select and use appropriate technology, instruments and formulas to solve problems, interpret results and communicate findings.

❖ **Related API: The student will match/sort by size, weight, capacity and/or length. The student will use appropriate tools to measure: ruler/inches, measuring cups/cooking. The student will pretend to measure the length of a road of blocks with a tape measure.**

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Explore Compare, Estimating, Spatial Relationships
Stage Five: *Math:* Geometry

Math Readiness activities in Stage Four introduce the learner to comparison and estimation without exact numbers. Both traditional and nontraditional units are used to measure and calculate length, area, and volume in Stage Five.

❖ **Related API: The student will find the cup and measure one cup of flour for the play dough recipe.**

Stage Five: *Math:* Fractions

Fractional notation and verbal prompts combine with drawings to reinforce the concept of fractions.

STATE GOAL 8: USE ALGEBRAIC AND ANALYTICAL METHODS TO IDENTIFY AND DESCRIBE PATTERNS AND RELATIONSHIPS IN DATA, SOLVE PROBLEMS AND PREDICT RESULTS.

Standard 8A. Describe numerical relationships using variables and patterns.
Standard 8B. Interpret and describe numerical relationships using tables, graphs and symbols.

❖ **Related API: The student will pattern by noticing that several children are wearing red shirts. The student will copy a sound of two fast claps and a pause, then two slow claps and a pause. The student will see the shapes on a border and copy the pattern with crayons. The student will draw dots on a paper in a repeating pattern (for example, green, blue, green, blue). The student will string beads in a repeating pattern according to color, shape or size.**

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Explore Patterns, Continue/Fill-In Patterns, Create Patterns
Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Mystery Shape, Mystery Person

Math Readiness activities in Stage Four introduce the learner to patterns using shapes, color, and sound, have them continue patterns, and allow them to generate their own patterns. Mystery activities in Stage Five ask the learner to identify and eliminate items based on colors and other object characteristics.

❖ **Related API: The student will create a chart with the teacher about the foods children bring to lunch.**

Stage Five: *Math:* Charts and Graphs

Charts and Graphs activities in Stage Five ask learners to interpret chart data that involves common items such as animals and money.

STATE GOAL 9: USE GEOMETRIC METHODS TO ANALYZE, CATEGORIZE AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT POINTS, LINES AND SPACE.

Standard 9A. Demonstrate and apply geometric concepts involving points, lines, planes and space.
Standard 9B. Identify, describe, classify and compare relationships using points, lines, and solids.
Standard 9C. Construct convincing arguments and proofs to solve problems.

❖ **Related API: The student will identify geometric shapes by using concrete objects. The student will identify shapes in nature.**

Stage Four: *Shapes:* Explore, Assess

Learners explore and identify two-dimensional shapes in isolation and in scenes.

❖ **Related API: The student will sort and/or match by shape, size, color or use of the object, within the natural context of an activity. The student will compare two-and three-dimensional shapes and identify relationships between them (e.g., square and cube).**

Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Number Guess, Mystery Shape, Mystery Person

Learners identify unknown number, shape, or person by deduction or applying elimination criteria.

STATE GOAL 10: COLLECT, ORGANIZE AND ANALYZE DATA USING STATISTICAL METHODS; PREDICT RESULTS; AND INTERPRET UNCERTAINTY USING CONCEPTS OF PROBABILITY.

Standard 10A. Organize, describe and make predictions from exiting data.
Standard 10B. Formulate questions, design data collection methods, and gather and analyze data and communicate findings.

❖ **Related API: The student will use a chart/table to make informed decisions (e.g., plan an activity, budget money).**

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Continue/Fill-In Patterns
Stage Five: *Math:* Charts and Graphs

The learner predicts which shapes should complete an existing sequence. The Charts and Graphs activity introduces the learner to graphical data representation and interpretation.